

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:

1. A messaging system comprising:

a web server computer; and

at least two video game systems, each game system being configured to connect to said web server computer via the Internet and to communicate status data indicative of an activity engaged in by a user thereof,

wherein said web server computer generates a session file based on the status data of the user and the status data of each of two or more buddies on a buddy list of the user, and

wherein the status data of the buddies on the buddy list is accessible to the user even if the user and the buddies are engaged in different activities.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data further indicates that a buddy is online and able to send/receive messages.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data further indicates that a buddy is online, but not able to send/receive messages.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the status data further indicates that a buddy is online and able to send, but not receive, messages.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein the web server computer stores user profiles for each of the users.

6. The system according to claim 5, wherein the user can configure the accessibility of the user's profile to other users.

1           7.     The system according to claim 5, wherein a system administrator can  
2 configure the accessibility of the user's profile to other users.

1           8.     The system according to claim 1, wherein said web server computer is  
2 responsive to a user-supplied request for communicating to that user an identification of  
3 all buddy lists on which the user appears.

1           9.     The system according to claim 8, wherein said web server computer is  
2 further responsive to a user-supplied request for deleting that user's name from one or  
3 more other user's buddy lists.

1           10.    A portable memory medium having stored thereon an application  
2 executable by processing circuitry of a video game system connected to a communication  
3 network, the application comprising both video game program code for a video game and  
4 messaging service program code for a messaging service for communicating messages to  
5 other messaging service users connected to the communication network, whereby the  
6 messaging service is accessible when the application is executed by the processing  
7 circuitry of the video game system in a non-multi-tasking mode.

1           11.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the portable  
2 memory medium comprises an optical memory medium.

1           12.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the portable  
2 memory medium comprises a magnetic memory medium.

1           13.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the portable  
2 memory medium comprises a semiconductor memory medium.

1           14.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the video  
2 game system is a hand-held game system, and the portable memory medium is adapted  
3 for operative coupling to the hand-held game system.

1           15.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the video  
2 game system is a video game console connected to a television, and the portable memory  
3 medium is adapted for operative coupling to the video game console.

1           16.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2 communication network is the Internet.

1           17.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2 messaging service program code includes a user registration routine for registering a user  
3 as a user of the messaging service.

1           18.    The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2 messaging service program code includes a user profile routine for creating a user profile.

1           19.    The portable memory medium according to claim 18, wherein the  
2 messaging service program code further includes a preferences routine for setting access  
3 limitations to the user profile.

1           20.    The portable memory medium according to claim 18, wherein the user  
2 profile includes a customized image comprising user-selected features.

1           21.    The portable memory medium according to claim 18, wherein the user  
2 profile includes a digital image of the user.

1           22.     The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2     messaging service program code includes a buddy list routine for creating a user buddy  
3     list.

1           23.     The portable memory medium according to claim 22, wherein the  
2     messaging service program code further includes a preferences routine for setting a  
3     buddy sign-on alert to provide an alert to the user when a buddy on the buddy list signs  
4     onto the messaging service.

1           24.     The portable memory medium according to claim 22, wherein the  
2     messaging service program code further includes a preferences routine for setting a  
3     buddy sign-off alert to provide an alert to the user when a buddy on the buddy list signs  
4     off the messaging service.

1           25.     The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2     messaging service program code includes a preferences routine for setting a message alert  
3     to provide an alert to the user when a message is received.

1           26.     The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2     messaging service program code includes an auto-start routine for automatically logging  
3     the user into the messaging service.

1           27.     The portable memory medium according to claim 10, wherein the  
2     messaging service program code includes a start routine for logging the user into the  
3     messaging service as being engaged in a particular activity on the video game system.

